

## Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT WASHDC PRIORITY 0000

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 620 - AUGUST 3, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING  
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY  
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

WARNING NOTICE SENTITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED NOT  
RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. LEBANON. THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON REMAINS  
STALEMATED. THE SYRIANS, THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, THE  
RIGJVISTS, AND THE ISRAELIS HAVE ALL GIVEN THE DEPLOYMENT  
OF THE 600-MAN LEBANESE ARMY UNIT GREAT SIGNIFICANCE.

2. THE SYRIANS STRONGLY FAVOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE UNIT.  
THEY HAVE GIVEN TACTICAL SUPPORT AND PROVIDED SECURITY  
SO THAT IT COULD REACH ITS PRESENT LOCATION. THE SYRIANS  
BELIEVE THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE  
LEBANESE CHRISTIANS IS TREASONABLE. THE SYRIANS VIEW THE  
SOUTHWARD MOVEMENT OF THIS PARTICULAR UNIT, OVER WHICH THEY  
APPARENTLY HAVE SOME INFLUENCE, AS THE FIRST STEP IN BREAK-  
ING THIS LINK.

3. ALSO IMPORTANT FROM DAMASCUS' PERSPECTIVE IS THE  
REMOVAL OF LOCAL LEADERS HADDAD AND SHADIYAQ. THEY ARE  
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VIEWED NOT ONLY AS TRAITORS BECAUSE OF THEIR OPEN TIES  
WITH ISRAEL BUT ALSO AS SYMBOLS OF CHRISTIAN LEBANESE  
RESISTANCE TO THE REUNIFICATION OF LEBANON UNDER SYRIAN  
AUSPICES.

4. THE ISRAELIS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN:

(A) PRESERVING THE BUFFER ZONE ALONG THEIR  
NORTHERN BORDER;

(B) RETAINING THE FRIENDSHIP AND TRUST OF THE  
SOUTHERN LEBANESE CHRISTIANS;

(C) PREVENTING THE DEPLOYMENT OF SYRIAN FORCES TO  
THE AREA JUST NORTH OF THEIR BORDER. (ISRAELI MILITARY  
ANALYSTS BELIEVE THAT TWO ADDITIONAL DIVISIONS WOULD  
BE NECESSARY IN ANOTHER WAR IF THE SYRIAN ARMY WERE  
PRESENT IN SOME FORCE IN THE SOUTH.)

WHILE THE ISRAELIS APPAR"NTLY REALIZE THAT THE DEPLOYMENT  
OF A SMALL LEBANESE UNIT, EVEN ONE WHICH IS GREATLY  
INFLUENCED BY THE SYRIANS, WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE

CATASTROPHE, THEY BELIEVE, AS DO THE SYRIANS, THAT IT COULD WELL BE THE FIRST STEP IN THE GRADUAL WEAKENING OF ISRAELI INFLUENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

5. HADDAD AND HIS FOLLOWERS VIEW THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SOUTH AS A DIRECT THREAT TO THEM. THEY DISMISS ARGUMENTS BY THE SYRIANS AND OTHERS THAT THIS IS THE ONLY MEANS OF REESTABLISHING CENTRAL AUTHORITY. RIGHTIST SPOKESMEN POINT OUT THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT'S REAL CONCERN WERE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS AUTHORITY, THEN THE UNIT SHOULD GO THROUGH PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED NABATIYA OR TYRE, WHICH ARE THE USUAL ENTRY ROUTES TO THE TIBNIN AREA. INSTEAD, IN THIS VIEW, THE FORCES ARE BEING SENT THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA TO BREAK THE POWER OF THE  
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LOCAL FORCES. MOREOVER, FEW IN THE SOUTH HAVE ANY FAITH IN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

6. IN THE PAST, THE AUTHORITIES IN BEIRUT HAVE SACRIFICED SOUTHERN LEBANESE INTERESTS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION IN THE CAPITAL. MANY SOUTHERN CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THE MOVEMENT OF TROOPS SOUTH IS MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO BUY MUSLIM, PALESTINIAN, AND SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR SARKIS BY SACRIFICING THE ENCLAVES.

7. THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL PROBABLY VIEW THE FIRING OF HADDAD AND SHADIYAQ AS AN ATTEMPT TO PUNISH MEN WHO WERE DEFENDING THEIR VILLAGES AND PERFORMING A FUNCTION THAT BEIRUT HAD NEGLECTED FOR A DECADE. HADDAD, FOR HIS PART, AT ONE POINT APPEARED WILLING TO COMPLY WITH AN ORDER TO TURN OVER HIS COMMAND. HE APPARENTLY CHANGED HIS MIND WHEN DOUBTS ABOUT THE HONESTY OF THE BEIRUT GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH HIM WERE RAISED BY REPORTS THAT SYRIAN FORCES WERE ACCOMPANYING THE ADVANCING FORCE, WARNINGS FROM A PHALANGE SOURCE THAT HE WOULD BE TREATED AS A TRAITOR IN BEIRUT, AND THREATS BROADCAST ON DAMASCUS RADIO THAT HADDAD WOULD BE REMOVED AND "DEALT WITH LATER."

8. THE FAILURE OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO DEPLOY THESE FORCES COULD RESULT IN ITS COLLAPSE. BEIRUT APPARENTLY DECIDED TO PUSH AHEAD BECAUSE IT FEARS THAT, IF IT DID NOT, UNIFIL MIGHT BE WITHDRAWN WHEN ITS CURRENT MANDATE EXPIRES. MOREOVER, BEIRUT CONSIDERS THAT CONTINUED CONTACT BETWEEN THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ISRAELIS IS EMBARRASSING AND COMPLICATES RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES AND WITH THE LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE NORTH.

9. NOW THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF  
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TO THE MOVE, THE NECESSITY TO CONTINUE HAS BECOME EVEN GREATER. A WITHDRAWAL AT THIS POINT WOULD HUMILIATE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND CONFIRM TO ITS CRITICS, WHO INCLUDE NEARLY ALL FACTIONS AS WELL AS THE SYRIANS, THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS INEPT. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD ENCOURAGE OTHER FACTIONS TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY, AND, EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE FORCED WITHDRAWAL COULD LEAD TO A BREAK UP OF THE RECONSTITUTED LEBANESE ARMY. (SECRET)

10. WEST BANK. EMBASSY TEL AVIV WAS TOLD ON JULY 31 THAT A NEW SITE IS BEING SOUGHT FOR THE RELOCATION OF TWO GROUPS OF SETTLERS IN THE SHILO AREA TO A PERMANENT SITE ON GOVERNMENT DOMAIN LAND. OUR EMBASSY COMMENTS THAT THE PROPOSED MERGER OF AN UNAUTHORIZED GROUP OF GUSH EMUNIM SQUATTERS WITH AN OFFICIAL SETTLEMENT SET UP UNDER THE ALIGNMENT GOVERNMENT IS AN ODD ARRANGEMENT WHICH MAY BE REJECTED BY THE GUSH. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

11. THE WESTERN SAHARA. THE SAHARAN WAR HAS DRAGGED ON INCONCLUSIVELY FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS. THE ALGERIAN-BACKED POLISARIO GUERRILLAS, WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED OCCASIONAL MILITARY SUCCESSES AS WELL AS SHARP REVERSALS, REMAIN UNABLE TO DRIVE MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA FROM THE

SAHARA. NOR HAVE THESE TWO COUNTRIES, EVEN WITH FRENCH AIR SUPPORT, PROVED THEMSELVES CAPABLE OF PERMANENTLY CRIPPLING POLISARIO MILITARY CAPABILITIES. SO LONG AS ALGERIA CONTINUES TO BACK THE GUERRILLA FORCES WITH SANCTUARY, WEAPONS, AND TRAINING (AND POSSIBLY MANPOWER AND LEADERSHIP AS WELL), A MILITARY SOLUTION APPEARS UNATTAINABLE.

12. THE MILITARY STALEMATE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE (WITH THE APPARENT EXCEPTION OF THE NEW MAURITANIAN REGIME) ARE CLOSE TO MAKING THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY FOR A SETTLEMENT:

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(A) MOROCCO, DESPITE THE CONSIDERABLE BURDEN OF THE SAHARAN CONFLICT, REMAINS ADAMANT ON THE ISSUE OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY IN THE TERRITORY.

(B) THE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE POLISARIO FRONT LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO BE THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT

SAHARAN STATE.

(C) ALGERIAN PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE IS COMMITTED TO THE  
POLISARIO CAUSE FOR A COMBINATION OF PERSONAL,  
GEOPOLITICAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL REASONS.

13. YET, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHWEST AFRICA--THE  
APPARENT READINESS OF THE NEW MAURITANIAN LEADERSHIP TO  
LOOK ACTIVELY FOR A WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT SAHARAN  
IMPASSE, THE POLISARIO ANNOUNCEMENT OF A TENTATIVE  
CEASE-FIRE IN MAURITANIA, AND EXPLORATORY MOROCCAN-  
ALGERIAN DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT-HAVE  
ADDED PROMISING ELEMENTS TO THE SAHARAN EQUATION. NEVER-  
THELESS, THEY DO NOT ASSURE AN EARLY END TO THE CONFLICT,  
WHOSE SETTLEMENT REMAINS DEPENDENT ON AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
MOROCCO AND ALGERIA. (SECRET/NOFORN) VANCE

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